

PHIL 232 A01
CRN#12481

September – December 2019
TWF: 11:30am – 12:20pm

Moral Problems of Contemporary Society

Instructor: Scott Woodcock
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Provisional Draft: This outline gives students a sense of what the course involves, but it is not the final, *official* outline.

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to a variety of controversial moral issues in contemporary society. In particular, students will be encouraged to carefully examine the *philosophical arguments* that arise in debates surrounding these controversial issues. The Thl \$ b &

questions. The goal is to learn how to articulate will address in the co animals, the basis for abortion raged in c

thoughtful discussion of the philosophical arguments proposed in the readings and th application to current events.

Course Website: Online course materials will be available via Uvic [CourseSpaces](#). T

access your customized *CourseSpaces* page, sign in to Uvic and click on *Online Tools*. You should see *CourseSpaces* as an option.

Texts: All readings available online via Uvic *CourseSpaces*.

Requirements: First paper (10%)
Mid-term test (20%)
Second paper (20%)
Final exam (40%)
Five: quote & comment assignments, *or*
news & comment assignments (5%)
Two activist letters (5%)

Note: Writing assignment due dates and midterm test dates are posted below in the

Grading System

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point
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Policy on Late Assignments: 5% per working day will be subtracted from grade unless documentation is provided of illness or family emergency.

Plagiarism: Review the [University Policy on Academic Integrity](#) (pp. 45-47) *carefully*, and be aware that anti-plagiarism software may be selectively used in this course. Resources will be provided via CourseSpaces for students seeking guidance about what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it, but *it is the responsibility of each student* to be informed about these details.

Counseling Services: Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with Uvic [Counseling Services](#), which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact *Counseling Services*. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates: Please consult the Uvic calendar's [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc.

Technology in Classroom: Some students require laptops or v

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Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Note: *Dates are subject to change!* Class attendance is essential to stay informed about scheduling changes. Material should be read *before* the class in which it is discussed so that students are prepared to contribute to class discussion.

Week Readings

<u>Week 1</u>	Introduction to Moral Problems
Sept. 4	First Meeting
Sept. 6	Michael J. Sandel: <i>The Case Against Perfection</i>
<u>Week 2</u>	Background Ethical Theory
Sept. 10 Sept. 13	Louis P. Pojman: <i>Utilitarianism</i> Steven Luper: <i>Kantianism</i>
<u>Week 3</u>	The Ethics of Genetic Engineering
Sept. 17	Julian Savulescu & Guy Kahane: <i>The Moral Obligation to Create Children with the Best Chance of the Best Life</i> [parts I & II] [Suggested = Russell Powell & Allen Buchanan: <i>Breaking Evolution's Chains: The Prospect of Deliberate Genetic Modification in Humans</i>]
Sept. 18	Robert Sparrow: <i>A Not-So-New Eugenics</i>
Sept. 20	How to Write a Philosophy Paper
<u>Week 4</u>	Genetic Engineering and the Concept of Disability
Sept. 24	Adrienne Asch: <i>Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion: A Challenge to Practice and Policy</i> + Julian Savulescu & Guy Kahane: <i>The Moral Obligation to Create Children with the Best Chance of the Best Life</i> [part III]
Sept. 25	David DeVidi & Catherine Klausen: <i>No Mere Difference</i> [Suggested = Elizabeth Barnes: <i>Valuing Disability, Causing Disability</i>]
Sept. 27	Sahar Akhtar: <i>Respecting Embedded Disability</i>

<p><u>Week 5</u></p> <p>Oct. 1</p> <p>Oct. 2</p> <p>Oct. 4</p>	<p>Environmental Ethics</p> <p>Joseph DesJardins: <i>Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life</i></p> <p>Ben Bradley: <i>The Value of Endangered Species</i></p> <p>Robert Elliot: <i>Faking Nature</i></p> <p>*** First Writing Assignment Due ***</p>
<p><u>Week 6</u></p> <p>Oct. 8</p> <p>Oct. 9</p> <p>Oct. 11</p>	<p>Collective Action Problems</p> <p>Garrett Hardin: <i>The Tragedy of the Commons</i></p> <p>Review</p> <p>*** Midterm Test #1 ***</p>
<p><u>Week 7</u></p> <p>Oct. 15</p> <p> </p> <p>Oct. 18</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Abortion – Part One</p> <p>Mary Anne Warren: <i>On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion</i></p> <p>Don Marquis: <i>Why Abortion is Immoral</i></p>
<p><u>Week 8</u></p> <p>Oct. 22</p> <p> </p> <p>Oct. 25</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Abortion – Part Two</p> <p>Judith Jarvis Thomson: <i>A Defense of Abortion</i></p> <p>Margaret Olivia Little: <i>Abortion, Intimacy, and the Duty to Gestate</i></p>
<p><u>Week 9</u></p> <p>Oct. 29</p> <p>Oct. 30</p> <p>Nov. 1</p>	<p>The Moral Status of Prostitution + MMA</p> <p>Martha Nussbaum: <i>“Whether from Reason or Prejudice” Taking Money for Bodily Services</i></p> <p>Scott A. Anderson: <i>Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy: Making Sense of the Prohibition of Prostitution</i></p> <p>Steven Weimer: <i>On the Alleged Intrinsic Immorality of Mixed Martial Arts</i></p>
<p><u>Week 10</u></p> <p>Nov. 5</p> <p>Nov. 6</p>	<p>Obligations to Relieve Global Poverty</p> <p>Peter Singer: <i>Famine, Affluence, and Morality</i></p> <p>Jan Narveson: <i>We Don’t Owe Them a Thing!</i></p>

Nov. 8	Robert Noggle: <i>Give Till It Hurts? Beneficence, Imperfect Duties, and a Moderate Response to the Aid Question</i> [Suggested = Violetta Igneski: <i>Defending Limits on the Sacrifices We Ought To Make For Others</i>]
<u>Week 11</u>	Sweatshop Labour and Just Restitution
Nov 11-13	Reading Break – No Class
Nov. 15	Todd Calder: <i>Shared Responsibility, Global Structural Injustice, and Restitution</i>
<u>Week 12</u>	The Wrong(s) of Colonialism
Nov. 19	Anna Stilz: <i>Occupancy Rights and the Wrong of Removal</i> [Parts I and III] [Suggested = Margaret Moore: <i>The Taking of Territory and the Wrongs of Colonialism</i>]
Nov. 20	Lea Ypi: <i>What's Wrong with Colonialism</i> [Parts I-III, VII-VIII, & X, XI]
Nov. 22 	Glen Coulthard: <i>Seeing Red</i> (ch. 4 from <i>Red Skin, White Masks</i>) *** Writing Assignment #2 Due ***
<u>Week 13</u>	Sex and Drugs
Nov. 26	Danielle Bromwich and Joseph Millum: <i>Lies, Control, and Consent</i>
Nov. 27	Douglas Husak: <i>Four Points about Drug Decriminalization</i>
Nov. 29	Peter De Marneffe: <i>Against the Legalization of Heroin</i> *** Last Day to Submit Q&C Assignments ***
<u>Week 14</u>	Final Review
Dec. 3	Review *** Last Day to Submit Activist Letters ***
Dec. 4	<i>National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</i> All Classes at Uvic cancelled from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm.

Warning: there will be a **Registrar Scheduled Exam in December**. I do not control the date of this exam, and I do not have the power to change this date once it is scheduled. Therefore, *do not book travel during the exam schedule* until you know the dates of your exams.